



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

October 22, 2015

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Donovan:

We write to urge the Administration to dedicate sufficient resources and direction in Fiscal Year 2017 to protecting the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins from Asian Carp and other invasive species. To that end, we hope the Administration will agree to the following requests that are critical to this objective:

- Budget \$3 million specifically to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Feasibility Study at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, and make every effort to complete the study and Chief's Report in the three year time frame that is required in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014.
- Review emergency protocols and identify and deploy countermeasures in the interim periods leading up to completion of the Chief's Report.
- Request robust funding for surveillance, research, and other initiatives by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Coast Guard that are critical to near- and long-term efforts to fight Asian Carp and other aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

On April 6, 2015, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) initiated the GLMRIS Brandon Road Study. While we welcomed this announcement, the 46-month projected timeframe for completing the study was disappointing and inconsistent with the 3x3x3 rule enacted in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014. There is no question that challenges exist to developing and implementing measures that prevent the transfer of AIS at Brandon Road. However, two recent findings illustrate the urgency of the situation and need to advance emergency and interim measures while the USACE completes the Brandon Road feasibility study. A Fish and Wildlife Service study released October 15 found that small fish -- including Asian Carp -- can become entrained between barges and transported through a lock and dam and across the existing electric dispersal barriers. In addition, a study last month discovered juvenile silver carp 52-miles closer to Lake Michigan than in 2014.

Recently, the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee and the Great Lakes

Commission and Great Lakes Fishery Commission sent the President two letters in support of action at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Together, these letters illustrate a consensus among diverse stakeholders that Brandon Road can serve as a critical choke point for preventing further penetration of Asian Carp and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi River systems. Moreover, the research and implementation of control technologies at Brandon Road will provide a valuable template for evaluating long-term measures to prevent the two-way transfer of AIS. Ultimately, it is these long-term efforts that will provide the greatest protection to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

This administration has provided unprecedented leadership in advancing initiatives to restore the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. We believe that requesting sufficient funding in Fiscal Year 2017 for the USACE' feasibility study and advancing emergency and interim countermeasures that prevent further spread of Asian Carp and other AIS is consistent with that commitment to protecting the health and sustainability of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

Sincerely,


Debbie Stabenow, Co-Chair
United States Senator



Mark Kirk, Co-Chair
United States Senator


Joe Donnelly
United States Senator


Rob Portman
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Richard Durbin
United States Senator


Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

cc: Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense
Dan Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior
Chris Korleski, Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, Environmental
Protection Agency
Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and Director of the
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce
Dr. Suzette Kimball, Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey, Department of
Commerce
Rear Admiral Paul Thomas, Assistant Commandant of Prevention Policy, U.S.
Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security